

Limiting the Transmission of COVID-19 in Food Establishments

The Richmond City and Henrico County Health Districts are providing the following information about protecting patrons and employees against COVID-19.

Reducing the Spread of COVID-19

- Food service must be limited to service of food intended for off-premise consumption ONLY. Eliminate seating of patrons on the premises (indoors or outdoors)
- Home delivery of orders is allowed.
- **Restaurant lobbies may remain open for take-out only. The restaurant must maintain adequate social distancing and may only allow up to 10 patrons in the lobby at one time.** Facilities are encouraged to bring take-out orders outside. This will better protect patrons and restaurant employees, and reduce the number of persons touching lobby/entrance surfaces like door handles.
- Management should encourage customers waiting to pick up orders to maintain a minimum of 6 foot spacing.
- In convenience stores allowed to remain open under Executive Order 53, self-service of foods, including condiments and beverages, and where multiple guests may handle common utensils, is strongly discouraged.
- Management should identify and implement operational changes that increase employee separation; however, social distancing to the full 6 feet may not be possible in some food facilities. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the risk of an employee transmitting COVID-19 to another is dependent on distance between employees, the duration of the exposure, and the effectiveness of employee hygiene practices and sanitation. When it's impractical for employees in these settings to maintain social distancing, effective hygiene practices should be maintained to reduce the chance of spreading the virus.
- Maintaining social distancing in the absence of effective hygiene practices may not prevent the spread of this virus. Food facilities should be vigilant in their hygiene practices, including frequent and proper hand-washing and routine cleaning of all surfaces.

Suggested Control Measures

- Talk with your workers about [employee health requirements](#) and expectations
- Food workers, including managers, with symptoms of coughing, shortness of breath, fever, or other symptoms of illness should not return to work until they are symptom-free.
- Employers are encouraged not to require employees to provide a doctor's note to return to work, because doing so will burden the medical system.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces, including menus and digital ordering systems, countertops, doors and door handles, etc., with cleaners and disinfectants that are [EPA-approved for emerging viral pathogens](#). Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.

Additional precautions for employees

- Keep employee bathrooms stocked with soap and paper towels. Handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent COVID-19 transmission.
- Ensure adequate supply and convenient placement of alcohol-based hand sanitizers for use by persons inside food establishments.
- Provide extra supplies of napkins or tissues for employees to use when coughing or sneezing.
- Ensure delivery drivers and other persons who provide services to the food establishment also abide by social distancing guidelines.

For additional information related to COVID-19, please visit: www.vdh.virginia.gov.